

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the following remarks.

In the Office Action of March 24, 2005, Claims 1-7 and 14-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,830,545, to Bendall. Claims 10-11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bendall. Claims 8 and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bendall in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,876,332, to Looney. Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bendall in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,805,664, to Doyle et al.

In response to the rejections, applicant has amended Claims 1-4, 7-9, 12, 14, 16 and 18-20 in order to further clarify applicant's invention, and has also cancelled Claims 5-6, 10-11, 13 and 15, and has added new dependent Claims 21-26. With the entry of these amendments, Claims 1-4, 7-9, 12, 14 and 16-26 are pending in the application.

The claimed features of applicant's invention are in contrast to the device of Bendall which is intended to be slideable and is not coupled to a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft. As described in Col. 1, lines 15 et al. of Bendall, the device is directed to sliding tubes. More specifically, it is stated that feeding an insertion tube with one hand is difficult, as *the tube tends to slide out of the area of interest when it is released*. (Emphasis added.) It is stated that in prior systems one hand was often used to hold the position of the insertion tube steady as the other hand moved down the tube in preparation for the next push. The device of Bendall is therefore directed to means for gripping (either using one's fingers through holes in the device or else various clamping mechanisms) to engage the tube so as to prevent the tube from sliding. Thus, while Bendall may describe various mechanisms for gripping a tube, it does not teach, disclose, or suggest a rotating component (e.g., a collar) that is couplable to a fixed feature (e.g., a breakout box) on the endoscope shaft.

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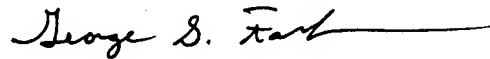
Thus, in regard to independent Claims 1, 14, and 18, applicant respectfully submits that neither Bendall, nor any of the other cited references, teach, disclose, or suggest each element of the amended claims. In particular, neither Bendall, nor any of the other cited references, teach, suggest, or disclose, in addition to the other elements of the claims, a rotating component that is couplable to a fixed feature on the endoscope shaft, and which allows the operator control device to rotate with respect to the endoscope shaft.

CONCLUSION

Applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-4, 7-9, 12, 14 and 16-26 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, applicant respectfully requests that the claims be allowed and that the case be passed to issue. Should any further questions remain, the Examiner is invited to contact applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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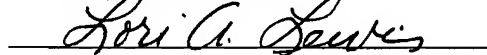


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